

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2013*

**Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Fundraiser in Santa Monica, California**

*June 7, 2013*

*The President.* Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Oh, we're okay, guys. Sit down. Thank you. Thank you.

Well, to Peter and Meg, I just want to thank them so much. Not only have they been longtime supporters, back when a lot of people couldn't pronounce my name—[*laughter*]*—*but more importantly, they have supported so many good causes, most recently Meg's unbelievable work on education here in Los Angeles. We truly appreciate it. They are not only great friends, but they're great citizens. And for them to open up their home like this we very much appreciate. So give them a big round of applause.

As has already been mentioned, we've got your current mayor, who has been able to overcome his natural reticence, his shyness—[*laughter*]*—*to somehow become one of the finest leaders that we have in this country. We could not be prouder of his tenure, Mayor Villaraigosa. We're grateful for him.

Eric Garcetti and I rode over here together, and we were reminded that the last time I think I was in this neighborhood, I was riding with Eric Garcetti—[*laughter*]*—*who at the time, I was still a candidate for President and Eric was doing great work on the city council and one of my earliest supporters. And to see him now have the opportunity to take on all the enormous challenges, but also realize the unbelievable potential of this great city is just really encouraging. So I'm looking for great things out of Eric Garcetti. We're really proud of him.

And I don't remember whether she was in the car or not, but I know she was part of that same team back when we were running, and since that time, she has been elected to Congress, and she is doing great work day in and day out fighting on behalf of working families. So I could not be more grateful for her friendship; Karen Bass is here as well.

Now, Peter gave a pretty exhaustive summary of what we need to do and what we've done, and I'm not sure I've got a lot to add. [*Laughter*] And yet I feel obligated to—[*laughter*]*—*since you guys wrote these big checks to the DNC—to say something. [*Laughter*] So let me give it a shot. What I'll do is I'll tell—I'll start with a story of what I did yesterday.

Yesterday morning—because I know there are a lot of folks here who are interested in education. Yesterday morning I visited a town, Mooresville, North Carolina. And the reason we went down there was because Mooresville ranks 110th, I think, out of 115 school districts in North Carolina when it comes to funding, and yet, in terms of student performance, they rank number 2.

And the reason is, is that the superintendent—and your superintendent, I know, is probably familiar with some of what's happened there. The superintendent there made a radical decision to replace all textbooks with laptops. They just stopped buying textbooks. The theory was, is that textbooks were only being renewed every 7 years. By the time you got it, some third-grader is looking at geography, and the Soviet Union is still around—[*laughter*]*—*and it's out of date. And so he said we're just going to move to laptops. We're going to entirely reshape our teacher training process so that they understand how to interact with young people in this new medium.

And so I went from station to station, meeting kids who, in math class, were starting their own businesses on their laptops and tracking profits and losses and inputs and outputs and marketing. In English class, a group was evaluating the Inauguration poem that was read in my first Inauguration, except one of the students was leading the class, writing notes on a board that was automatically transmitted onto the laptops of every student in the class. You had students who said—who bragged about the fact that, we keep on learning even after school is finished, which is not what normally teenagers brag about.

And you have this distillation of what I see as I travel all across the country, which is incredible people, remarkable youth, energy, dynamism, creativity, enthusiasm, optimism about the country. And sometimes, when people ask me, how do you manage through all the crises and so on that you have to deal with every day, I tell them stories like that because it reminds me, as Peter and I were talking about before we walked out, sometimes, we do not fully appreciate what a good hand we've been dealt here in this country.

We have so much going for us, starting with our people. We have a sense of energy and dynamism and creativity that is not matched anywhere in the world. We have a system that is open and creative and disruptive, that when it's operating at its best, gives every single person the chance, if they work hard and they've got a new idea, to achieve their dreams.

When you look at our position in the world, we have been blessed with incredible natural resources. We have an unparalleled university system. We've got the best researchers, the best scientists. We've got incredibly hard workers and an incredibly hard work ethic. And when you add all this up, there's absolutely no reason why the 21st century shouldn't be the American century just like the 20th century.

The one place where we're challenged is not on a particular issue, it's the fact that over the last several years, we've got a Federal Government that has been gridlocked and a political culture that makes it difficult for us to make common cause and make commonsense, smart decisions that would serve those kids that I saw yesterday well.

And that's the reason you're here. That's the reason I ran in 2008. That's the reason I ran in 2012. That's the reason Antonio has been fighting the good fight and Eric is about to take up the challenge and Karen slugs it out in Congress, is because we're interested in changing a political culture in which the focus is on how do we score political points, and instead we focus on how do we get things done on behalf of the next generation. And if we get that right, we cannot be stopped.

On every issue that Peter mentioned, there are solutions that we know can work. You care about education? We have models of schools where kids from the poorest backgrounds, if they're getting early childhood education, if they're getting high-quality teachers, they're going to succeed. They can overcome—they are so resilient, that can overcome stuff that most of us can't even imagine.

You care about climate change? We've doubled fuel efficiency standards on cars and trucks. We have doubled the production of clean energy. We have actually reduced carbon emissions down to 1994 levels, and the entire economy has become more energy efficient. And if we just take a few steps that don't require any reduction in growth or diminution in our standard of living, we can make real progress, and we can lead the world. We know what we need to do.

If you care about jobs and the economy, manufacturing has come roaring back. We've created over half a million new manufacturing jobs at a time when people said, there's no way

for manufacturing to succeed in this country. It turns out, actually, that folks are insourcing; they're bringing jobs back here to the United States because of low energy costs, because we've got incredibly productive workers, and we remain a massive market. And if we change our Tax Code, for example, to incentivize manufacturing here in the United States, there's no reason that can't continue.

When it comes to fiscal issues, you'll recall that we had this big debate as recently as 6 months ago about the deficit and the crisis and disaster. Well, it turns out we've actually reduced the deficit now at the fastest pace since World War II. By 2015, the deficit is projected to be 2.1 percent of GDP. It was 10 percent when I came into office.

And if we had just made some sensible decisions with respect to our health care programs and with respect to our Tax Code, the truth of the matter is, is that we can make every investment that we need to make to ensure long-term growth and ensure fiscal stability for generations. We don't have to make the kinds of adjustments that you're seeing Europe have to make. We don't have to radically transform our economy in ways that the Chinese are going to have to make decisions about over the never several years, because the basic framework that we've got is sound. We just have to buck up and make some sensible decisions.

So there is not a single issue out there where I look at it and I say we can't make progress. And by the way, there's not a single issue out there in which I say what's needed is some deeply ideological, top-down approach. There are a bunch of sensible, commonsense, centrist approaches that would do just fine.

So that's all by way of saying that the reason we're here today is we got to figure out how we change that political culture. Now, I've run my last campaign. I have a friend Ab Mikva, in Chicago, a former Congressman, Federal judge, White House Counsel. Ab came from the same neighborhood in Hyde Park where I live. And Ab used to say that being friends with a politician is like perpetually having a kid in college. *[Laughter]* They just—every so often, you got to write this big check. And you're trying to figure out, where is this money going. *[Laughter]* Now, the good news is, I'm about to graduate. *[Laughter]* So—I can't say the same for the rest of these elected officials here, but I've run my last campaign. So all I care about right now is governance and getting things right so that I can look back at this time where I had this incredible privilege of leading this country and say the country is better because of my tenure. That's all I care about, which means that for the next 3 years, every single time I've got an opportunity to do some work with Republicans and they're game to do something sensible, I'm ready to do it.

So, for example, we have seen some hopeful signs that we can get finally a broken immigration reform system fixed, and I intend to get that done before the end of the summer. And for us to be able to accomplish that, we've got to have Republicans who are willing to take what, for them, are some difficult votes and some tough stands. And we've seen some good leadership from people like John McCain and Jeff Flake, but also from folks like Marco Rubio.

And every time I see that opportunity to work with Republicans, I will seize it. And my hope is, is that on things like early childhood education and rebuilding America's infrastructure that traditionally have not been ideological issues that I can get some cooperation out of them.

But I have to say that right now the nature of the Republican Party makes it very difficult for them to engage in commonsense discussions around solving problems. And all of you see it. I don't have to spell it out for you. But within their ranks there is a tendency to believe that compromise is a dirty word and that government is something to be torn down, as opposed to

something to be embraced as a facilitator for the private sector and ordinary citizens to be able to achieve their dreams.

And so what that means is, is that I will get a lot more done with a Democratic House, and I sure need to keep a Democratic Senate.

And there shouldn't be any contradiction for people to recognize that wherever I can get cooperation from Republicans, I want cooperation, regardless of the politics. If I've got a bunch of Republicans who just for purely political reasons, decide we've got to get right with immigration communities and so we're going to pass immigration reform, I'm not concerned about their motives—although, I think the folks who so far have stood up are deeply sincere about what needs to be done—but even if it's political calculation, I'm game.

But what I also know is that deep down, there are some contradictions right now in the Republican Party that makes it hard for them to do what needs to get done in this country. And that's why I'm going to be fighting as hard as I can to make sure that we send to Congress people who share my values and share a sense of America's promise and understand that America's promise is based entirely on the notion that everybody gets a fair shot, regardless of where they came from, what they look like, what their last name is, who they love.

And then, those kids that I saw in Mooresville, there are kids just as gifted, just as talented, just as promising in East L.A. or in South Side of Chicago or in some rural community in Arkansas, and that we've got to be working for all those kids. That's what, for me, it means to be a Democrat. And I think that's what it means for a lot of you as well.

So I want to thank you for your efforts. I appreciate what Peter said about donor fatigue. On the other hand, we don't have time to be fatigued, because we've got too much to do. And everybody here has been blessed in ways that require us to give something back. Everybody here has got a story to tell, but the truth of the matter is we're here in part because we were lucky enough to be born in a country where if we worked hard and we had a big dream, we could make it happen.

We were lucky. And we've got an obligation then to make sure that folks coming behind us are blessed with that same good luck. And it's within our capacity. So we don't have time to be tired and we don't have excuses. We know what needs to be done. I intend to make sure that it gets done. And I'm going to need your help.

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:16 p.m. at the residence of Peter F. and Megan Chernin. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa and Mayor-elect Eric M. Garcetti of Los Angeles; Mark A. Edwards, superintendent, Mooresville Graded School District in Mooresville, NC; John E. Deasy, superintendent, Los Angeles Unified School District; and former White House Counsel Abner J. Mikva. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Democratic National Committee fundraisers :: Santa Monica, CA.

*Locations:* Santa Monica, CA.

*Names:* Bass, Karen R.; Chernin, Megan; Chernin, Peter F.; Deasy, John E.; Edwards, Mark A.; Flake, Jeffrey L.; Garcetti, Eric M.; McCain, John S., III; Mikva, Abner J.; Rubio, Marco A.; Villaraigosa, Antonio R.

*Subjects:* Budget, Federal : Deficit and national debt; Business and industry : Manufacturing industry :: Improvement; California : Democratic Party events; California : President's visits; Congress : Bipartisanship; Democratic Party : Democratic National Committee; Education : Low-income students; Education : Standards and school accountability; Education : Teachers; Education : Technology and innovation, expansion efforts; Elections : 2014 congressional elections; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Energy : Fuel efficiency standards, strengthening efforts; Environment : Carbon emissions; Environment : Climate change; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; Immigration and naturalization : Reform; Taxation : Tax Code, reform.

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